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the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
Fifty-eighth session
6-23 March 2001

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

GREECE

1. The Committee considered the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth periodic reports of Greece, submitted as one document (CERD/C/363/Add.4), at its 1455th and 1456th meetings (CERD/C/SR.1455 and CERD/C/SR.1456), held on 16 March and 19 March 2001, respectively. At its 1462nd meeting (CERD/C/SR.1462), held on 22 March 2001, it adopted the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the report submitted by the State party, and expresses its appreciation for the additional written information provided in February 2001 and the oral information provided by the delegation. It particularly appreciates the opportunity to resume a positive and constructive dialogue with the State party.

3. The Committee notes the valuable information contained in the report, prepared in accordance with the Committee's guidelines for the form and content of periodic reports, and welcomes the fact that the report addresses a number of the concerns and recommendations of the Committee's concluding observations on the eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh periodic reports (CERD/C/210/Add.1).

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee is encouraged by the self-critical approach of the State party's report and by the commitment of the State party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

5. The Committee notes that since the submission of its last report the State party has ratified a range of international human rights instruments and has signed - although not yet ratified - the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

6. The Committee welcomes the information provided in the report and by the delegation concerning the extent to which courts and other tribunals and administrative authorities give direct effect to the provisions of international human rights instruments in their decisions, and the attention given by courts to the case law of international judicial or quasi-judicial bodies when interpreting human rights instruments.

7. The Committee welcomes the establishment of national machinery with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of human rights, and notes in particular the diverse and pluralistic structure of the national commission on human rights established by Law 2667/1998. The Committee also notes the important role of the National Radio and Television Council, the Code of Journalistic Ethics and the draft Code of Ethics for Information and Other Journalistic and Political Programmes in preventing racial discrimination, racist and xenophobic behaviour and stereotyping in the mass media.

8. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to date aimed at promoting effective equality among individuals, with particular attention to Roma people, migrant workers, refugees and asylum-seekers, and the minority populations in Western Thrace.

9. The Committee notes the information provided by the State party according to which members of minority groups participate in the political life of the country at the national and municipal levels.

10. Consistent with the State party's expressed desire to integrate - rather than assimilate - minority groups into the social, economic and cultural life of the country, in a manner aimed at preserving their diverse cultures and identities, the Committee welcomes the information provided by the State party concerning the implementation of educational programmes aimed at the teaching of the Greek language to students with a different mother tongue, and the training of teachers in the teaching of Greek as a second language.

11. The Committee welcomes the information provided by the State party on the extent to which it has implemented to date General Recommendation XIII (42) concerning training of law enforcement officials in the protection of human rights.

C. Concerns and recommendations

12. Noting that the report of the State party refers to the "Muslim minority of Western Thrace", and within this group to Turkish, Pomak and Roma groups, and not to other ethnic groups in the country, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its General Recommendations VIII (38) on the right of each person to self-identification and XXIV (55) concerning article 1 of the Convention in this regard.

13. The Committee encourages the State party to build upon its education programmes at all levels in order to counter negative stereotypes and promote the objectives of the Convention. The Committee recommends that the State party take into account the Committee's General Recommendation XXVII (57) concerning Roma in further legal and policy initiatives.

14. The Committee encourages the State party to pursue further its dialogues with representatives of the Roma, Pomak, Albanian and other minority populations, with a view to expanding as necessary the available range of multilingual educational programmes and policies.

15. Recalling the repeal in 1998 of article 19 of the Citizenship Code, and mindful of the clear incompatibility of this repealed law with the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party explore and implement appropriate remedies, including the possibility of reinstatement of citizenship, for the benefit of persons deprived of their citizenship under article 19 in the past.

16. The Committee recommends that the next periodic report provide information on the demographic composition of the population.

17. The Committee recommends that the State party include in its next periodic report statistics on jurisprudence of cases where the relevant provisions of the Civil and Penal Codes have found application.

18. The Committee recommends that the State party take further measures to increase the awareness of the principles of the Convention by law enforcement officials.

19. The Committee recommends that the Convention, the State party's report and these concluding observations be widely disseminated by the State party, including among minority populations.

20. The Committee welcomes the stated intention of the State party to make the declaration under article 14 of the Convention as soon as possible, and encourages it to take steps in that regard.

21. The Committee recommends that the State party ratify the amendments to article 8, paragraph 6, of the Convention which were adopted on 15 January 1992 at the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties.

22. The Committee recommends that the State party submit its sixteenth periodic report jointly with its seventeenth periodic report, due on 18 July 2003, and that it address the points raised in the present observations.